

SR 169 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session

Meeting Summary

Meeting date: Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Location: Renton City Hall
HR Training Room
1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98055

Attendees: ***Partners in attendance:***

City of Black Diamond: Jason Paulsen
City of Enumclaw: Chris Searcy
King County Department of Transportation: Jennifer Lindwall
City of Maple Valley: Dave Zielinski
Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC): Michael Cummings
City of Renton: Bob Mahn
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT),
Headquarters Design Office: Nancy Boyd
WSDOT, Northwest Region: Rick Roberts
WSDOT, Urban Planning Office: Seth Stark

Others in attendance:

Backcountry Horsemen/Friends of Rock Creek Valley: joan burlingame
EnviroIssues: Kristine dos Remedios
Transpo Group: Jon Pascal
WSDOT, Urban Planning Office: Chris Picard, Richard Warren, Gary Westby

Welcome and Goals for the Day Seth Stark, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth reviewed the session agenda and distributed a packet of updated traffic analysis and benefit-to-cost analysis materials.

The goal of this meeting was to reach consensus on the final recommended improvements for the SR 169 Route Development Plan. This meeting will be the last formal meeting of the SR 169 CWG.

Review Improvement Options Seth asked the group if a quick review of the three SR 169 improvement options would be valuable. The group agreed that a brief overview would be beneficial for the discussion. On the back of the agenda was an outline of the three improvement options:

- Improvement Option #1
 - o Corridor section improvements,
 - o Intersection improvements, and
 - o Widening to 4 or 5 lanes from SE 291st Street to just north of Jones Road
- Improvement Option #2
 - o Corridor section improvements,
 - o Intersection improvements,
 - o Widening to 4 or 5 lanes from SE 291st Street to just north of Jones Road, and
 - o Widening to 6 lanes from 140th Way SE to I-405
- Improvement Option #3
 - o Corridor section improvements,
 - o Intersection improvements,
 - o Widening to 4 or 5 lanes from SE 291st Street to just north of Jones Road, and
 - o Widening to 6 lanes from Jones Road to I-405

Results of the Traffic Analysis

Since the last SR 169 CWG meeting, the team updated the traffic analysis in order to determine a data-supported, specific ending point for the proposed 6-lane expansion of SR 169. The study team's original response was sent out via email earlier in June.

The team received comments back from Maple Valley and Enumclaw. The updated materials distributed at this meeting summarize the results of the traffic analysis and outline the recommendation from the team.

The traffic analysis suggests there is a need for a 6-lane expansion at least past the 140th Way SE intersection. A 4-lane facility is predicted to provide enough capacity to operate at acceptable levels of operations east the 152nd Avenue SE intersection.

Extending the 6-lane widening past 152nd Avenue SE would require acquiring right-of-way in addition to that already needed for the proposed expansion to 4 lanes at Jones Road. The 152nd Avenue SE intersection is also the urban growth boundary, and a six-lane highway beyond this point may be difficult to get approved due to growth management policies. The Jones Road intersection has an unstable slope which would require extensive use of retaining walls. The Cedar River and the county trail are in close proximity on the north side of the highway also making widening more difficult.

Therefore, the recommendation from the team was somewhere between Option #2 and Option #3, in essence a hybrid of the two options. Accept the 6-lane expansion of Option #2 but continue it past 140th Way SE to 152nd Avenue SE.

Discussion:

- Richard asked if the only part of the corridor that would be widened would be from I-405 to 152nd Street. Seth said no, that there would be two areas with truck-climbing lanes. There would also be widening to 4 or 5 lanes between SE 291st Street and Jones Road. Some parts of the highway are already at 4 lanes this would provide continuity through the described segment. Improving intersection operations will also require some spot widening for turning pockets.

- Joan Burlingame asked if the trail underpasses were taken out of the proposal. Seth said no, this presentation was primarily a traffic analysis response to the questions from the last meeting. The trail underpasses are a part of the recommendation and are shown in Exhibits K through P.
- Jason Paulsen inquired about a previously proposed center turn lane in Black Diamond that does not show up in exhibits A through I. Jason said he realized those exhibits may not be at a level of detail for the center turn lane to be visible, but he wanted to confirm they would still be a part of the final recommendation. Seth said that those exhibits are at a much higher level and the more detailed exhibits, Exhibits K through P, show where a center turn lane would be added.
- Chris Picard asked where within the black sections on Exhibits A through I would the route become 5-lanes. He was concerned that the access classification along some portions of SR 169 within these sections would not allow a 5-lane highway. Seth agreed and said that the highway would only be widened to 5 lanes where 5 lanes would be allowed. Chris said it may be beneficial to clarify the locations of these 5-lane sections.
- Dave Zielinski said that he would like to advocate for widening to 6-lanes to Jones Road. Traffic volumes do drop off but traffic volumes increase again through the City of Maple Valley where other communities, such as Covington, connect to SR 169. Dave claims the unstable slopes at Jones Road are nothing compared to those slopes that would be encountered when widening from I-405 and 152nd Avenue SE. Also, the benefit cost ratio is about the same or higher as it is for the other sections that are recommended for widening to 6 lanes.
- Nancy Boyd noted that because 152nd Avenue SE is the urban growth boundary, traffic west of 152nd to I-405 is more likely to increase than east of 152nd Street. She also pointed out that much more land use development is likely west of the urban growth boundary than east of the boundary.
- Chris Picard said that it is important to recognize connections between urban areas, even though those connections occur outside of urban growth boundaries. However, it is also important to understand that there are limited resources for corridor improvements and the data indicates the 152nd Avenue SE is the best location to end the 6-lane widening. The data does not support widening SR 169 to 6-lanes all the way to Jones Road. The rest of the RDP will propose intersection improvements beyond 152nd Avenue SE.
- Joan Burlingame asked if truck traffic has been specifically unusual based on an agreement between the trucking companies and the City of Maple Valley. Dave Zielinski said no, that the trucking companies are operating under a current agreement with King County, which they seem to violate every day. Most of the truck traffic is related to the airport project haul, which will end in November, but then the next big project will come along. The City of Maple Valley is working on an agreement related to the reauthorization of the Kangley gravel mine, which would limit truck traffic to no more than two trucks per traffic signal cycle.
- Chris Searcy asked someone to explain why there is a travel time benefit in the benefit-to-cost information if there is very little to no improvement in travel time along the corridor with the recommended improvements. Gary Westby said that the travel time differences should be compared between the no-build and the recommended improvement option, and not existing condition. Without any improvements, travel times will continue to increase. The recommended

improvements will allow travel times to stay the same or improve with the projected growth along the corridor. It is important to remember the few minutes of travel time in one PM peak period trip is then multiplied by the number of travelers using SR 169 on a yearly basis over a period of 25 years to get to the final “benefit” that is factored into the benefit-to-cost for the 25 year project period.

- Jason Paulsen asked that the final RDP include some speaking points or main arguments that the partners can use when they are lobbying to the legislature for funding for improvements. It is important to have these points when requesting a portion of already limited funds available for transportation improvements.
- Chris Picard also noted that it is not likely to get \$230 million in one lump sum to implement all of the improvements outlined in the final RDP. Most likely the funding will come in phases and therefore the projects will be implemented in phases. The RDP should include somewhat of a prioritized list of improvements that will generate the most benefit for the investment. To address Dave Zielinski’s concerns about the need to widen to 6 lanes past 152nd Avenue SE to Jones Road, the RDP should also include a statement that when funding is available for the widening project, the need to widen out to Jones Road should be reevaluated in the design phase.
- Jason Paulsen supported Chris Picard’s idea of including a reexamination statement in the RDP for widening to Jones Road. Dave Zielinski also agreed that this would be helpful.

Review and endorse Recommendation

Seth Stark asked if there was consensus on the recommendation. The CWG partners agreed that the team’s recommendation should be included in the draft and final RDP.

Discussion:

- Joan Burlingame wanted to reiterate the need for a truck bypass for SR 169.
- Dave Zielinski agreed that a bypass would be beneficial. The City of Maple Valley is looking into an additional alternative route to SR 169, which should be noted in the final RDP.
- Chris Searcy asked for someone to explain how the surrounding roadways shown on Exhibit B would benefit from the corridor improvements, if these are not parallel roads to SR 169. Jon Pascal said that typically, these adjacent routes benefit from improvements on SR 169 because traffic will have more of an incentive to use SR 169 than local routes because of the improvements. Chris Picard also agreed that this was confusing and that while he understands the concept, the graphic does not do a good job of showing it and suggested not using it in the final RDP.

Next Steps

Seth said that the team will incorporate the feedback received today into the draft RDP. The CWG partners should receive the draft RDP for their review by mid-August. The partners will then have three weeks to review the draft and give WSDOT their comments. The final RDP should be complete by early fall. Seth said that he is willing to give a presentation on the final RDP at the request of the partners.

Discussion:

- The partners agreed that the plan should be complete before the legislative session so councils and electeds have a finished product to use to lobby for project funding.

- Jason Paulsen also suggested that the partners get together and produce a piece for the public so the partners can show progress, including projects that are currently moving forward and the priority projects in the RDP. It is important to show the partnership between the jurisdictions on SR 169.
- Dave Zielinski also asked how improvements to I-405 may impact SR 169. Chris Picard asked Seth to make sure that the I-405 receives a copy of the draft RDP to review and comment on.

Bob Mahn wanted to make sure the partners knew that the City of Renton is looking to annex 320 acres on the south side of SR 169 from the current city boundary at 130th to about 161st, which is just at the east edge of the last major development on the south side of SR 169. This proposal is at the 60% review phase and may create the opportunity to change the land use past 152nd. Chris Picard noted that this information makes it even more important to include a reexamination of widening SR 169 past 152nd to Jones Road during the design phase of the project.

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- Memorandum which includes:
 - Table of contents
 - Adjusted benefit-to-cost analysis for the SR 169 improvement options
 - Summary of traffic analysis for the SR 169 improvement options
 - Proposed recommended improvements